



The Willingness to See and the Courage to Act

by Peter Bailey
peter.bailey@proutyproject.com

As I write these words from the executive lounge of an international airport, it occurs to me just how much "blind" ambition has become a worldwide epidemic. Instead of using hushed tones, courteously monitored in consideration of one's neighbors, the senior executives surrounding me seem to be in a harried, driven world of their own. One could almost take an emotional intelligence Geiger counter to measure their levels of the four components of EQ:

1. **Self-Awareness:** Do they know how loud and harried they are in speaking to their colleagues?
2. **Self-Management:** Are they able to regulate their own behavior to be more in keeping with the people around them and the cultural mores of their host country?
3. **Organizational Awareness:** Are they aware of the impact they are having on others and what impression they are making on everyone?
4. **Relational Management:** Are they aware of how their behaviors are diminishing their capacity to work well with others or serve as an honorable example of their company or their country of origin?

Amid the flurry and stress to get things done in a technology-mediated environment, are we losing sight of our personal impact on those around us?

Throughout our years of working to develop leaders at all levels of the organization, we've discovered effective leadership today requires tackling a brand new challenge. That challenge is self-awareness.

So much of leadership today depends first on adequately understanding ourselves through self-mapping tools before we can address our ability to work well with others. For this very reason, we often recommend and incorporate in our strategic planning processes Insights Discovery Personal Profiles, Emotional Intelligence Assessment, or the Global

Ambassador Proficiency Toolkit before the planning process begins.

A senior leadership team of an international food company recently engaged us to support their strategic planning process by first facilitating Insights Discovery® for their team. Soon after, the team found themselves undergoing the most significant reorganization of upper management in the history of the company. When I later met for lunch with the president and the senior HR partner, they were ecstatic about how intact their team was, how well they had "weathered the storm," and how excited they were to be building for the upcoming year on the solid footing we had helped them establish months before. They attributed the success they had had to their ability to integrate the tools and behavioral modifications gained from the Insights Discovery® and Emotional Intelligence instruments we used in that process.

Whatever challenges present themselves to a leader and a team, removing blind spots can help to create an environment for success. Having the ability to see blind spots, however, requires two things: the willingness to see and the courage to act. We first need to be willing to see ourselves through the lenses of instruments which plainly and simply identify the key strengths that can help us and the key weaknesses and attributes which could potentially derail our effectiveness and thwart our efforts for advancement in our companies. Second, we need to have the courage to take action on the areas that need attention and take sincere steps to modify our behavior.

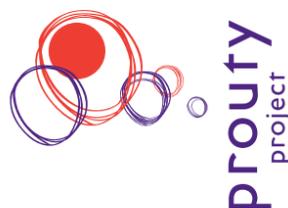
There is a subtle but profound movement afoot. This effort to be a vulnerable leader – by seeing ourselves through insightful lenses and acting boldly to make important changes in our behavior – it is the leadership wave of the future.

Start looking for these leaders – they are growing up all around you.

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6385 Old Shady Oak Road, Suite 260, Minneapolis, MN 55344
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Prouty Project
Phone: 952.942.2922
Fax: 952.942.2922
proutyproject.com
6385 Old Shady Oak Road
Suite 260
Minneapolis, MN 55344

GS3: Graveyard Shift Strategy Session

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For five years, we've been looking for the client to "test-drive" a graveyard shift strategy session (10 p.m.-7 a.m.).

Our premise: People will think differently, look at the world differently, and perhaps, behave differently as a team, when working through the night.

Over the past five years, we've had a number of clients ask about it, but when they ran the idea up the flagpole, interest was very limited.

And then along came Mark Walinske (Chair of the Board), Betsy Grams (Executive Director), and Tony Schiller (Chief Motivator), with the board of CycleHealth. CycleHealth was created one year ago, with a focus on "creating a new cycle of health in America, starting with the youngest generation."

January 29-January 30 (Thursday evening, 10 p.m.-Friday morning, 7:00 a.m.) we held the CycleHealth board strategic planning retreat, with 13 participants, in our Creative Think Tank and Strategic Leadership Lab. A huge success, which looked like this:

- Warmed up, ready to jump in at 10 p.m.
- Festive, energetic, every step of the way.
- Healthy, high-energy food (fruits and vegetables) served throughout the night.

- 3:00 a.m. outdoor winter walk, 30 minutes, beautiful moonlit night, with headlamps.
- Focused, no distractions, no cell phones, no texting.
- No yawns (surprisingly).

Kudos to everyone on the CycleHealth board for jumping in feet first with this experiment. The ideas, the resilience, the sustained energy were very, very impressive.

If your management team or board is ready to explore GS3, please give us a call. We're confident you'll be stretched in a positive way.

Here's a toast to many, many "night insights" in 2015,



jeff.prouty@proutyproject.com

"C" NOTE QUOTE:

"There's a mantra that I have, which is fatigue is your friend. There's a point at which, in anything artistic, the critical faculty can overwhelm the creative faculty. When you're tired, you just write it, and all sorts of different kinds of work comes out."

Know the quote?

If you know who said this quote, please send an email to: kari.baltzer@proutyproject.com or call 952.942.2922 by **Monday, May 4**; one guess per person. If we have more than one correct answer, we throw those names into a hat and draw the winner of a \$100 gift card.

Last issue's "C" Note Quote winner is...

Don Thorpe of Shared Experience Consulting

Don knew Satya Nadella, Microsoft's CEO, recently paraphrased the Oscar Wilde quote: "We need to believe in the impossible and remove the improbable."

Congratulations, Don!
Don plans to take his wife out to dinner with the gift card.



Don Thorpe



Tools of the Trade: Getting the Most Out of Assessments

by **Mike Felmlee**
mike.felmlee@proutyproject.com

For more than 27 years, we have been intimately involved with helping our clients take their businesses to the next level. In that time, we've seen an explosion of assessment tools available in the marketplace. From the robust tools, like Myers-Briggs, based on decades of highly vetted research, to online marketing devices masked as assessments, to everything in between, the opportunities to get "diagnosed" by an outsider's perspective are more accessible than ever before.

While we've successfully used a number of assessment tools to help businesses gain meaningful traction, we've found our clients can be overwhelmed by the available choices. They wonder how much do

assessments really reveal? How accurate are the results? And are they worth the investment?

"I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail."

~ **Abraham Maslow**

The truth is, there is no magic bullet. Even the best assessments, like anything else, are merely one perspective or framework from which to approach the business issue at hand. In the end, it's not the diagnosis that truly matters. It's what you do with the information gleaned from the assessment that determines your success. Creating meaningful strategies and behaviors from the feedback takes a thoughtful approach, daily practice, and accountability, which we believe is best offered from an outside expert who can guide you through the process from start to finish.

As you consider employing an assessment tool for your business and employees, here are a few quick tips to get you started.

Be aware of possible conflicts of interest

Many consultants make their livings on one particular assessment in which they have been certified. If a consultant is recommending that you invest in an assessment tool, be sure it has been selected from a large consideration set

before investing in its implementation. As Abraham Maslow said, "I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail." Make sure the advisor you are working with is taking a careful look at the whole "toolbox" before recommending the proverbial hammer.

Keep solutions, not results, top-of-mind

It can be easy to take great comfort in getting the "answers" provided by an assessment and then think your work is done. Remember, an assessment is just the first step. Just as a doctor uses tools and tests to diagnose a patient before prescribing a treatment, the best business advisors do more than merely sell you a diagnostic tool. As you consider whether an assessment is worth your investment, ensure the recommended tool is but one part of a holistic approach to the business issue at hand.

Look for staying power

Newer assessments can offer fresh and relevant perspectives. They can also be the latest flash in the pan. While newly published books and powerful marketing engines can drum up a lot of support for a new approach, the best assessments have been proven over time. Look for tools that have been refined over many years and in many situations by qualified researchers, psychologists, and consultants.

In the following pages, Sam and Peter will share some examples of how we have used assessments in our practice to help our clients evaluate their strategic planning processes, display better leadership, and galvanize their teams.

If you would like to talk more about how assessments can improve your business, please call us at 952.942.2922.



Marcia Ballinger
Ballinger Leafblad



Ann Bares
Altura Consulting Group



Jill Bastyr
Enbridge, Inc.



Christopher Cassirer
Northwestern Health Sciences University



Jessica Hansen
Ohly



Mark Johnson
Star



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Molly Simmons
Tom Slaird, Fulcrum Holdings
Scott Wallace, Salo



From Assessment Results to Team Results

by **Sam Smith**
sam.smith@proutyproject.com

In theory, we can accomplish more as a team than we can as individuals. Moving from theory to practice, however, depends upon the functional state of your team. Think of your own experience. Whether in business or athletics, your community or church, or even in your family, what are the characteristics of the best team you've been a part of?

When we ask clients to reflect on this question, they say things like, "We had a common purpose with clear expectations. We understood each member's strengths and relied on one another. We had a common goal and really enjoyed working together."

When we ask about the worst team people have been a part of, we usually hear things like, "Everything took longer. We didn't really know each other. People had their own agenda. We avoided conflict and never really felt like we were on the same page. We spent a lot of time on things that didn't move us toward our goal."

"We were able to discuss things in a way we have never before."

That experiential data becomes especially valuable if you can select the best tool to capture it in a meaningful framework, interpret the findings, and then integrate a strategy for building on strengths and overcoming challenges.

At the Prouty Project, we like to walk the talk. So in January, we began the process of assessing our own team performance with the simple hope of ratcheting it up to the next level. Like many of the clients we work with, we are a team of talented individuals who work well together, yet intuitively sensed an opportunity for increased performance. We needed a fresh perspective on where to focus our team building energy to get the best return on our effort.

We turned to a well-respected team performance assessment. The assessment consisted of statements that helped us to create a common language around the critical aspects of our team, and resulted in

a customized report to identify our team's strengths and challenges.

Getting our results was just step number one. We used the data to design an approach to team development focused on very specific objectives. Then, the hard work began. We started by establishing a safe environment to review the assessment results and talk candidly through issues. There were confessions. There were debates. There were moments of deep appreciation for one another. There were moments where we held each other accountable. And there were moments of strategic brilliance. In the end, we identified priorities and created strategies for strengthening team identity, candor, alignment, and recognition.

The assessment was merely the tool to create a space for rich, facilitated dialogue. As one team member put it, "we were able to discuss things in a way we never have before."

As we carry our discussions into practice, we have been able to better articulate our team identity and reason for being. We're operating with greater candor, better expressing our individual needs and assumptions to increase trust and speed in getting work done. And our team has been experiencing greater clarity in how decisions are made while also developing a culture of celebration. In short, all of our work has led to a real sense of renewal.

This leg of our team's journey has just begun and we are well on our way to experiencing the meaningful benefits found on a "best team." Where do you see your team in this story? What is the potential impact of fine tuning the dynamics of your team to achieve high performance? We'd love to hear your story and help to write the next chapter in creating your "best team."